



Eulogy at Graveside, February 11th, 2026
Rabbi Anne Brener

Recording of Debbie Friedman (Marty's dear friend) singing
Brachut ha Bayot Tahat Confe Ha Schekhina

**When I walked to my car this morning
 A hummingbird flew across my path.
 Often, when I go out to perform a mitzvah
 It is a dove- a yonna- and it always feels like
 A blessing from my father,
 Who chanted Yonah in his synagogue every Yom Kippur
 But maybe this was a blessing from Marty**

Why not? Marty taught me to believe in magic.

**On the way here, I listened to Debbie's music
 And felt Marty's presence in so much of it.**

But I have been thinking that Marty was kind of like a really good Niggun.

**A powerful niggun finds something hidden deep inside
 perhaps something stuck
 something that needs to be felt
 something that needs to be changed
 It's sound focuses and amplifies the feeling
 Repeating it
 spending time with it
 exploring it
 giving it a voice
 staying with it
 until it begins to transform
 until it begins to heal**

Marty did that.

She was a healer
 She was transformative
 And Marty had to struggle to find her voice
 But once she found it....

to mix metaphors,

Like Miriam (her Hebrew namesake)
 in the song
 Debbie Friedman wrote for Marty for her
 Simcha Chochmat her sixtieth birthday
 And many of us thought that she was old then

Miriam/Marty was a weaver of immense variety
And the tapestry she wove not just sang,
 but changed our history

Marty found flaws woven
 into the fabric of our community
 Blemishes in the tapestry
 That many did not want to face
 She named them
 And, DOGGEDLY pulled on the thread

And through her insistence
 And with creativity

repair began to emerge

Marty was a force.

For those of you who were not able to attend the funeral
 At Temple Beth El Yesterday
 Or watch the live stream

Rabbi Julia Knobloch,
 who would have been Marty's dream rabbi
 Maybe even a Marty incarnation
 A woman, a poet, a feminist-she even has red hair-
 Described the arc of Marty's life

Remember Marty was in her 99th year
 Her life began almost a century ago.

We heard about a precocious girl
 Deliberately stifled
 denied the educational advantages

that she was offered
 because it was a time
 when girls were supposed to be seen and not heard
 and Marty taught herself to keep quiet.

We heard about the life
 of a pre-Betty Friedan housewife
 With five children and a difficult husband
 Her struggles and sometimes her stumbles.

We heard about how she
 unlearned not to speak
 unlearned not to speak

Spoke truth to power
 And challenged denial in the Jewish community
 regarding some of the evils in our midst
 including alcoholism and domestic and sexual violence
 and made us face it.

While at the same time celebrating
 as a cutting-edge Jewish feminist
 Dedicated to ritual, to the arts and to literature
 With humor and wisdom
 And such a big heart
 such a big heart

I don't want to repeat all that was said yesterday
 I encourage you to go to the Beth El website in a few days
 and read Rabbi Knobloch's hesped/eulogy
 I'll post what I said
 And ask others to post as well

Rabbi Julia Knobloch & Cantor Ilan Davidson
 would have been here today
 But for a previously scheduled funeral & burial
 Further south of San Pedro

And because of the conflict,
 I am here in their place.

Technically, and Marty would appreciate this:

"I am here to bury Marty and not to praise her."

But it is hard not to praise Marty
 Marty, my friend of 45 years,
 made a difference.

There's some poetic justice,
 In Marty's funeral and burial being in two places
 because Marty was often in two places
 she would drive into LA. and change the world
 and then she would go home
 To her Palas Verdes retreat.

to what her grandson Mathew described yesterday
 as her magical house
 with the masks
 and the books and the art
 and the waterbed
 and the bridal path in her back garden.

the place to which she retreated
 and was so beautifully cared for
 In her last years.

But her last resting place will be
 in the heart of the community she so profoundly impacted

The last time I saw Marty was late October
 shortly after the deaths of two of our mutual friends,
 Rabbi Arthur Waskow
 a founder of the Jewish Renewal Movement
 and director of the Shalom Center
 And Rabbi Mitchell Cheffitz
 Also a leader of Jewish Renewal
 And long-time chair of the National Havarah Institute
 Both prolific writers
 About Social Justice and Jewish mysticism.

Shortly after their funerals
 I walked into her house.
 I found her sitting,
 As always,
 on her recliner.

Before I could say anything
 Marty said,
 "our world has been diminished."

Oh Marty.
 Our world is once more diminished.
 And it is daunting to those of us left behind
 To move up to the front row
 To follow your example
 And heal the world

Linda, Randy, Judy, Stephen, Edward
 When the last parent dies
 We often realize that
 Even though they have been greatly impaired
 There is some element of protection
 That feels like it is stripped away
 And we feel an unexpected vulnerability

My sense is that all of you have made peace
 With your mother
 But through Kaddish,
 Through Yizkor
 and through Yahrzeit
 Judaism gives us tools to continue the conversation
 To continue healing the relationship
 Even when we no longer have access to them
 As earthly beings

As we do the excruciating work
 Of surrendering their physicality
 And discovering them as spiritual companions

But Marty's death is the end of an era

I think of all the people
 She outlived.
 All the people we have put in the ground before her.
 All the people waiting in the celestial realms
 To study Torah
 And read poetry
 and do jigsaw puzzles with her

Can I name names?

Her mother, Sidney, her siblings, Michael and Betty Signer,
 Jerry Weber, Norman Mirsky, Sabina Teubal, Stan Cheyit,
 Phoebe Sharaf, Jerry Bubis, Richard Levy. Debbie Friedmann, many more.

We have gone to a lot of funerals in 45 years
 But there were also lots of celebrations
 Many of them mentioned yesterday
 Creative rituals in which liturgy was infused
 With the voices of women

And here we are to celebrate and mourn
 As we tuck one of the great voices of the last generation
 Into the ground
 With a prayer easily infused with a feminist reading

The very name of the prayer *El Maley Rachamim*
 Conjures feminine imagery

El Maley Rachamim
 Means God filled with compassion
 But the word, compassion,
 Shares its Hebrew *shoresh* its root
 With the word for womb *Rechem*

This tells us that life is a journey
 From womb to womb
 And hints that our task in between

Is to stay aligned with the values of compassion
 For the short time in eternity
 (Marty's was longer than most)
 That we walk through though the world.

So we pray for this being
 Who demanded that compassion
 Be increased in our community
 With words that so fit her mission.

I will read you the translation and then I will chant it

God, filled with compassion,
 we surrender to Your
 womb of compassion
 the soul of dear Miriam
 the Daughter of Avraham & Chana.

Let it dwell in the heights
 and find its well-deserved rest
 Under the wings of the Shekhinah.

In the holy, pure heights-
 the radiant shining firmament-protect Marty's soul
 as she walks in her eternal world.

Please, Holder of Compassion,
 may she be folded
 into the infinite, winged mystery
 of that eternal dwelling place.

May her soul be bound
 in that bundle of life
 that is the resting place
 of souls who have You as their inheritance,

And may she rest in peace.

Now we bury Marty
In the traditional way
Each of us placing three shovelsful of earth
On the casket
As her physical body returns to the dust
In this case,
watered by the tears of God

We will let the family go first
And then each of us follow

There is a tradition of placing the shovel
Back into the earth after each of us finishes
Rather than handing it to the next person
So as to indicate our holding back,
Our reluctance to let go of one
Who has dwelled among us

Make lines on both sides
And then return here for the kaddish

KADDISH

We go to funerals
to honor and remember the person who's died
To comfort those who mourn
To remember the person his or her fullness
And, with that example,
to walk away determined,
to become more full, better people ourselves.

What better role model than Marty.
Miriam Bat Avraham & Chanah

This prayer, said in Aramaic, works like another Aramaic word:

ABRACADABRA

The Kaddish can be our like a magic tool.

When we mourn,
we strain our ears,
listening for the voice of the deceased—

until we hear that voice coming from our own hearts.
 Mourners, we yearn to continue the conversation.
 We search for the unsaid words, to resolve the unfinished issues.

The Kaddish can take us there.

Kaddish parts the curtains
 and forces open the space between the worlds,
 breaking open the crevices
 where the voices still come through
 and where all the worlds are one.

For the price of our yearning,
 our anger and our tears,
 the Kaddish will carry us
 beyond the edges of the world we know.

It takes us to a place of wholeness-
 of peace-where all the polarities dissolve,
 where life and death,
 black and white,
 male and female,
 God and not-God merge- become one.

Adonai Ehad.

The words of the Shema
 become the reality of the world.
 Kaddish ends exile.
 It suffuses the most profane regions
 with the holiness of God's name
 and wrests an Amen
 from the place it has not yet been forthcoming,
 the Amen we have been listening for,
 for our entire lives. That Amen sustains the world.

We will let Debbie have the last word:

May we be blessed as we go on our way
 May we be guided in peace
 May we be blessed with health and joy
 May this be our blessing Amen

Amen Amen
 May this be our blessing

Amen

**May we be sheltered by the wings of peace
May we be kept in safety and in love
May grace and compassion find its way to every soul
May this be our blessing Amen**

**Amen Amen
May this be our blessing
Amen**

**Amen Amen
May this be our blessing
Amen**

being denied and being stifled and we heard about a pre-Betty Friedan housewife with five children and an alcoholic husband and her struggles, and sometimes her stumbles.

and it stays with it and it spends time with it and it addresses it and in the process it changes it yesterday we heard about how Marty We heard about the life of a girl growing up of a precocious girl growing And we also heard about this cutting edge, Jewish feminist who nurtured so many myself included.

For those who were there yesterday or were able to watch the live feed I don't want to repeat everything that was sad. I would encourage you to go and if you weren't there, I would encourage you to go on the Temple death L of San Pedro website and read Rabbi Julia Knobloch's hesped and my comments. Why I am here From the funeral.

It was a quiet visit. I sang to her. We were both in a sad mood I sat down near her chair on a low stool and sang to her looking up at her. I reminded her.

To honor and remember the person who's died
 To comfort those who mourn
 To remember the person his or her fullness
 And, with that example,
 to walk away determined,
 to become more full, better people ourselves.